At first glance, I do not perceive many similarities between *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* and *The Countess Cathleen*. I think the best way to talk about the similarities and differences of these two plays is to discuss the same ideas regarding the two characters named Cathleen.

I think that unarguably, both Cathleens are very Irish in their being. Cathleen Ni Houlihan (hereafter referred to as Cathleen H.), it is safe to assume is Ireland itself. She represents everything about the country that is beautiful, but also very ancient. Countess Cathleen is also very Irish, but in a definitely different way. She seems as though a mother figure to the villagers. She returns to take care of them, with little thought of herself. She sustains them with her money, much as the land of Ireland would sustain the villagers.

Another difference between the two Cathleens is the supernaturalness that surround Cathleen H. Yeats includes within the dialogue of the play that Cathleen H. might very well be of the Sidhe. Adding to her mystique is the different appearances that she apparently has depending on who sees her. To the young men of Ireland, she is a beautiful young woman who can cause them to become enamored with her and want to fight for her protection. To others, she is just an old woman, who appears as ancient as Ireland itself. Countess Cathleen, although lacking the occultness of Cathleen H., is not without a certain spiritual quality. She is almost unbelievably generous and kind, even in an angelic way. Either way, both have this ability to cause people to serve them.
It is also important to remember the purpose that Yeats most likely was trying to achieve through each play. Countess Cathleen was a play produced more for enjoyment. In a much shorter play, Cathleen H. acts as a call for Irish nationalism. She calls the men of Ireland to stand for her, and die for her if they must. If they do die, she promises them immortality within the annals of Irish history.